



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District of Arizona*

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CONVICTED FELON AND REPUTED LEADER OF “BARRIO HOLLYWOOD” STREET GANG SENTENCED TO 52 MONTHS IN PRISON

TUCSON, Ariz. – Ernesto Clemente Romero, 28, of Tucson, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge David C. Bury to 52 months in federal prison plus three years supervised release and a \$7500 fine.

Romero was convicted by a federal jury on December 6, 2006 of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Romero is the reputed leader of the “Barrio Hollywood” Street Gang which operates in a westside neighborhood of Tucson, Ariz. He has a prior felony conviction for aggravated assault with a handgun, which makes it illegal for him to possess firearms or ammunition under federal law.

On the evening of May 25, 2006, officers of the Tucson Police Department responded to a call regarding a group of individuals drinking and playing loud music in the parking lot of a business on the West side of Tucson. Officers saw Romero leaning into a vehicle with a black object in his hand, then when he walked away from the vehicle his hand was empty. Later, a Ruger P94 9mm semi-automatic handgun was located in that same area of that vehicle. The judge considered Romero’s extensive history of criminal conduct and convictions dating back to age 14, much of which involved gang-related violent behavior and firearms, in imposing the sentence.

Romero’s prosecution is part of the District of Arizona’s Project Safe Neighborhoods, an illegal firearms enforcement program. Through ongoing partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, the U.S. Attorney is implementing a series of strategies that are designed to fit the specific gun crime problems throughout Arizona.

The City of Tucson is one of 25 cities nationally that have been targeted for a specialized enforcement initiative known as the Violent Crime Impact Teams (VCIT) Initiative. ATF is the lead federal law enforcement agency in this initiative, which uses an integrated federal, state and local law enforcement strategy to identify, disrupt, arrest and prosecute the most violent criminals in 25 U.S. cities. The VCIT concept was modeled after PSN successes, with additional ATF resources redirected from across the country to target specific areas that had an unacceptable level of violent crime, particularly firearms related homicides, as compared to the national average.

The investigation in this case was jointly conducted by the Tucson Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The prosecution was handled by Jennifer J. Maldonado, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

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